



Celebrating the Outstanding Work of our Students

**“Heroes and Role Models:
Barbra Streisand”
by Sabrina Frank
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A hero is someone who has done something outstanding. A hero may have saved a life, found a cure for a fatal disease, donated to charity with time or money. A hero could be someone who has helped you to get a passing grade even, or who has taught you how to play a sport that is now your favorite. A hero is someone who has done something to help, out of the kindness of her heart. A hero is someone who you admire for being extraordinary but not necessarily who you want to be like. You may feel as though being like someone you admire is too much work for you, even if you may admire how she handles her work. For example: Someone physically may not be able to play basketball, or maybe doesn't even like playing, but can still admire someone who plays very well because of her talent and passion.

For someone to be your role model, you not only admire many of her characteristics, but you want to embody them. My role model is not only a role model to me, but also a hero. My hero and role model is Barbra Joan Streisand- an Emmy, Oscar, Tony, Grammy etc. award winner known for her bold personality and outstanding talent.

Barbra Streisand is a Jewish woman who was born on Pulaski Street in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn on April 24, 1942. Her biological father- Emanuel Streisand was a high school English and Psychology teacher with a PHD in education. Tragically, he died when she was only 15 months old due to a cerebral hemorrhage. As a result of his death, her family plunged to an economic level JUST above poverty. This left little time for Barbra's mother to be with her kids. Her mother remarried to a man whom Barbra did not get along with.

Barbra Streisand was VERY insecure about her looks growing up, but continued to pursue her dreams, and right now she is an amazing actress, singer, writer, director, and producer in the entertainment field. I admire this in Barbra because what people say affects how I present myself. One goal I have set for myself is to not let other people's opinions stand in the way of my ability to do what I wish, like Barbra has done successfully.

Barbra is also an outspoken democrat who donates much time and money to political causes such as slowing down global warming. Like Barbra, I try to be a leader, courageous, a feminist, respectful, loyal and someone who persists in pursuing her dreams.

Once she got into the entertainment business, Barbra continued to pursue her wishes. While shooting her first movie, Funny Girl, in the opening scene, Barbra Streisand was already suggesting to the director how she should make her appearance. She wanted to “emerge from the train in a great puff of smoke.” The director refused, but I admire the fact that she was bold enough to share her idea. I try as much as I can to share my ideas even when they may not be popular, and hope to continue doing this even more courageously.

Barbra Streisand has a very bold personality. In all her movies that I have seen, her personal values shine through. I think she is a hero for this because she respects and stays loyal to her own ideas by never letting them get lost, even when she is pretending to be someone else. For example, in Funny Girl, the character she played was an actress and singer who was fired because of her terrible dancing skills. But, her character did not just sadly walk away, and accept the fact that she was told that she could not be on stage; she pleaded then insisted on demonstrating what she could do until the same company that fired her, re-hired her to be in a dance that involved roller skating. She got her way, but it turned out she couldn't dance with roller skates on... any better than without. She was an amazing singer though, and the man who hired her asked her to get back on stage at the end of the dance performance to sing a SOLO. She got very nervous when she saw all the people looking at her, but continued to sing anyway, and the crowd loved her.

As an actress, Barbra Streisand pursues her wishes and dreams just like her character did in Funny Girl. Also, like her character in Funny Girl, in the beginning of her life on stage, Barbra Streisand had incredible stage fright. She still has this fear, but performs anyway because it is her passion. My parents have always taught my brother Wyatt and me to try to face and conquer our fears. And, like Barbra, I hope in life to be someone who can always face her fears no matter how difficult it may be.

This year I played a lot in my basketball games. Although I got nervous at times, I didn't let my fears over take me because I knew that would affect my playing. Another fear I have is stage fright. As you can see I am conquering it right now and I hope I am doing well on this stage. Even though sometimes I need to be reminded to face and conquer my fears, I know that making sure my fears don't overwhelm my chances to succeed in, and even surpass my goals, will make me feel much better about myself. I am sure that Barbra knows letting her fears over take her will affect her performance as well.

Other than being bold through characters she plays in movies and on T.V., Barbra Streisand is very bold with her views in politics. As Barbra has said, "...until women are treated equally with men, until gays and minorities are not discriminated against, until children have their full rights, artists must continue to speak out, and I will be one of them. Sorry, Rush... Newt... Jesse... the artist as a citizen is here to stay." I personally support the idea of artists as citizens because I know that everybody, as a citizen has a right to their opinions and to express those opinions. Not all celebrities take a stand for what they believe in, and if they do, most do not take a stand in and out of the spotlight. Out of the respect she has for our world, Barbra does support the issues she believes in, in and out of the spotlight.

Issues that Barbra Streisand takes a stand for are gun control, gay rights, women's rights, voter education, nuclear disarmament, and overcoming the problems of poverty and AIDS. She also supports equality, dignity and respect for all people and, most importantly, ecological studies and slowing down global warming.

Barbra Streisand donates to the issues she believes are worth her time and money through performing, her website, and her foundation. In her website, Barbra offers suggestions on ways to save energy, and she has written letters to President Bush, and about President Bush on his policies, and ideas. "The Barbra Streisand Foundation" established in 1986 supports her activism in politics. It has raised millions of dollars.

For the movie Yentl, Barbra Streisand co-wrote the screenplay based on Isaac Bashevis Singers' book, and directed the movie. She also acted and sang as the main character. It is a story about a young Orthodox Jewish girl named Yentl who loves to read Talmud- a book containing commentary of rabbis on aspects of Judaism. But, because of her gender she is not allowed by the culture of her community to pursue her passions.

Her father had secretly taught her what she was not allowed to learn and when he died, she took her dreams into her own hands. She dressed like a male and went to a Yeshiva, a school for orthodox Jewish boys to study Talmud.

Barbra raised awareness of several issues by being a huge part of Yentl's production. These issues are equality between men and woman, pursuing your dreams no matter what obstacles are thrown in your way, loyalty, and friendship.

Barbra Streisand, as an actress, has never failed (*at least in the many movies I have watched*) to make some or many parts of her character and the movie laugh out loud funny. No matter how serious the role, she makes sure viewers can laugh. I truly admire this and in my own way try to find the humor in everything I can. Life can get very hard, and stressful, but being overly serious is not going to help us get through most of our hard times. We can learn from our hard times, but as we live through them it is important to find humor in them because if you can make yourself a little happier, why not?

Barbra Streisand grew up in a kosher home, attended a Jewish school, Hebrew summer camp, and learned to read Hebrew and sound fluent. However, because she did not learn how to understand Hebrew, she concluded there wasn't a point for her, in learning how to read it. Now, as an adult she sees herself as deeply Jewish and does not approve of traditions or ceremonies in which someone memorizes and reads something they do not understand. It seems as though she would agree with the type of Bat Mitzvah ceremony I am having because I am not only aware of what my papers say, I wrote them! Barbra is proud to be Jewish and generously supports Jewish causes and philanthropies in the United States and Israel.

Barbra Streisand is a bold, respectful, intelligent, creative, humorous, loyal person who I find to be a hero and a role model. Her ways of life are not out of my reach, and I believe that many of the qualities I admire about her, I can incorporate into my own lifestyle. Barbra Streisand is someone who I am like now, and someone I hope to be like in the future.